

March 2026

Dear Mr Mattheis,

My name is Robin Scott, and I am writing on behalf of my nephew, Joseph "JJ" Millett. I am asking you, with great urgency and with deep respect for our justice system, to look carefully at the facts of his case — not with the eyes of a prosecutor looking for a headline, but with the eyes of a community that owes a debt to the men and women who have sacrificed so much in service to this country.

I have known JJ his entire life. He is a veteran of the Iraq War, a former corrections officer at the Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport, Vermont, and one of the most decent, responsible, and honorable people I have ever known. JJ did not grow up looking for trouble — he grew up looking for ways to serve. He served his country overseas in one of the most dangerous conflicts of our generation. He came home and continued to serve his community as a corrections officer, earning a reputation among colleagues and inmates alike for his calm under pressure, his fairness, and his integrity. A federal court document from 2023 (Case 2:22-cv-00029-2) references him by name for his quick, professional response when an inmate was in medical distress — calling for assistance and acting to save that person's life. That is who my nephew is.

In late February of this year, JJ experienced a severe psychiatric crisis. This was not a plan. It was not a choice. It was a documented mental health emergency — a psychotic episode, believed to have been triggered by a recent change in his VA-prescribed medications. Veterans who carry the weight of combat trauma and years of high-stress service are particularly vulnerable to these kinds of episodes, and they deserve our compassion, not our condemnation.

What JJ did in that moment of crisis speaks volumes about his true character. He called a crisis line. He reached out for help. He voluntarily met with police, explained his distress honestly, and surrendered his weapons of his own accord to ensure that no one — not himself, not a stranger, not a neighbor — would be harmed. He then allowed himself to be taken into custody. He did everything right. He followed every protocol a veteran in distress is trained and urged to follow. And for that, he is now facing a charge of Domestic Terrorism.

I ask you to sit with that for a moment. A man who called for help is being charged as a terrorist. A man who surrendered his weapons voluntarily is being treated as a public threat. A man whose private journals — kept at the recommendation of his own doctors as a therapeutic tool for processing trauma — are being used as evidence of criminal intent. Those journals are not a plan of action. They are the raw, painful expression of a man trying to heal. They are a pressure release valve, not a blueprint. To treat them otherwise is not justice; it is a profound misreading of how trauma recovery works.

A charge of Domestic Terrorism requires specific, clear intent — a deliberate, goal-directed plan to terrorize the public. JJ had no such plan. He was in a medical fog, and his only goal was to find safety and help. His actions — calling a crisis line, cooperating with

police, surrendering weapons, accepting custody — are the opposite of terrorism. They are the actions of a man fighting to protect others even while he himself was in crisis.

I am also deeply aware of what this case says to every other veteran in Vermont. If JJ is convicted on these charges, we are telling our veterans that calling a crisis line is dangerous — that honesty about PTSD, suicidal thoughts, or mental breakdown will earn them a jail cell rather than a doctor. We will be dismantling the very safety net we have built for the men and women who sacrificed the most. That is not the Vermont I know, and I do not believe it is the Vermont any of us want to live in.

I am not asking for special treatment for JJ. I am asking for fairness. I am asking that his medical records be taken seriously. I am asking that his history of honorable service be weighed. I am asking that the standard of intent required for a terrorism charge be applied honestly and rigorously. And I am asking that the State of Vermont live up to the promise that “No Man Left Behind” does not end at the airport when our veterans come home.

JJ spent his life protecting this community and this country. I am asking this community and this state to protect him now. Please act with mercy, with fairness, and with the full understanding that what happened to JJ was a medical emergency — not a crime.

Sincerely,

Robin Scott